

Witnesses to the Gas Chambers of Auschwitz

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1. Summary

An eye-witness testimony must always be verified. There are two essential means of substantiating such testimony in criminal cases: confronting the account with the material elements (in particular, with expertise as to the crime weapon), and the detailed cross-examination of the witness on what he purports to have seen. Thus, in the proceedings where it had been a question of the homicidal gas chambers of Auschwitz, no judge nor any attorney was able to claim any kind of expertise regarding the weapon of the crime; moreover, no lawyer ever cross-examined the witnesses by asking them to describe with precision even one of these chemical slaughter-houses. That is, up until 1985. When witnesses that year were finally cross-examined on these subjects during the first Zündel trial in Toronto, their rout was total. Because of this resounding set-back and by reason of other calamities previous to or following 1985, the defenders of the thesis of Jewish extermination have begun to abandon a history of Auschwitz primarily founded on testimonies and are obliging themselves, at the present time, to replace it with a scientific basis, or, at least, one which appears scientific, founded on factual research and proofs. The "testimonial history" of Auschwitz in the manner of Elie Wiesel and Claude Lanzmann is discredited. Its time has passed. It remains for the exterminationists to attempt to work like the revisionists on the facts and the evidence.

In the present study, "gas chambers" is intended to mean "homicidal gas chambers," or "Nazi gas chambers." By "Auschwitz," it is necessary to understand this as Auschwitz I or Auschwitz Stammlager, as well as Auschwitz II or Birkenau. Finally, by "gas chamber witnesses," I am indiscriminately designating those who claim to have participated in a homicidal gassing operation at these locations and those who are content to say they either saw or perceived a homicidal gas chamber there. In sum, by "witnesses," I mean those whom one usually designates as such, whether it is a matter of judicial witnesses or media witnesses; the first have expressed themselves under oath in the docket of a legal proceeding, while the second have given testimony in books, magazine articles, films, on television or the radio. It so happens certain witnesses have alternately been of both the judicial and media types.

This study is devoid of any psychological or sociological consideration for the Auschwitz gas chamber testimonies, as well as any consideration along the lines of what is physical, chemical, topographical, architectural, documentary, and historical by which these testimonies are unacceptable. It aims above all to make evident a point which the revisionists have so far not mentioned but which is nonetheless of prime importance: up until 1985, no judicial witness of these gas chambers had been cross-examined on the material nature of the facts reported; when, in Toronto, at the first Zündel trial in 1985, I was able to cause such witnesses to be cross-examined, they collapsed; since this date, there are no longer any gas chamber witnesses presented in court except perhaps at the trial of Demjanjuk in Israel where, there again, the witnesses revealed themselves as false.

To begin, I will digress upon the grievous causes by which, since 1983, Simon Veil was led to recognize that there existed no witnesses of the gas chambers.

2. The Thesis of Simone Veil

After the end of the war, the illusion that there were innumerable witnesses to the Auschwitz gas chambers was gradually accepted. By the end of the 1970s, with the arrival of historical revisionism into the media arena, particularly in France, it began to occur to certain individuals that these witnesses were perhaps not as numerous as one had believed. It is thus that, during the preparations for a major trial which Jewish organizations had intended against me during the early 1980s, their lawyers and in particular, Robert Badinter, the future Minister of Justice, experienced severe difficulties uncovering evidence and witnesses. With staff in hand in the manner of the pilgrim, they were obliged to go to Poland and to Israel so as to bring back, if possible, that which they could not find in France. All for naught!

My first trial took place in 1981, followed by the appeal in 1983. Not one single witness took the risk of appearing in court. On April 26, 1983 the Paris Court of Appeal rendered its verdict. Naturally, I was found guilty, as one might have expected, for "harm to others," which is in fact to say for harm caused to Jews for the exposition of my theses in the mainstream press. Yet the court coupled this verdict with remarks sufficient to cause my adversaries a fair degree of consternation. My work was judged to be substantial and yet dangerous. It was dangerous because, in the opinion of the judges, it appeared I allowed other persons the possibility of exploiting my discoveries for reprehensible ends! All the while, this same work was substantial in the sense that, in the opinion of the court, one could uncover neither negligence, frivolousness, willful ignorance, nor lies -- and this contrary to what had been affirmed by the adversarial party which had accused me of "causing harm to others by falsification of history." (sic)

On the subject of testimonies, the court went so far as to pronounce:

"The researches of Mr. Faurisson have dealt with the existence of the gas chambers which, to believe multiple testimonies, would have been used during the Second World War to systematically put to death a portion of those persons deported by the German authorities." [my italics]

The court perfectly summarized what it called my "logical thread" and my "reasoning" by specifying that, for me,

the existence of the gas chambers, such as usually described since 1945, conflict with an absolute impossibility, which suffices by itself to invalidate all the existing testimonies or, at the least, to stamp them with suspicion [my italics].

Finally, the court, drawing a practical conclusion from these considerations, decreed the right of every Frenchman not to believe in the evidence and witnesses of the gas chambers. It stated:

"The value of the conclusions defended by Mr. Faurisson [as to the problem of the gas chambers] rests therefore upon the sole appreciation of the experts, the historians and the public."

Two weeks later, Simon Veil publicly reacted to this judicial decision -- upsetting for her and her co-religionists -- with a declaration of extreme importance. She admitted the absence of proofs, of traces and even witnesses of the gas chambers, but added this absence was easily explained because:

"Everyone knows [she asserts] that the Nazis destroyed these gas chambers and systematically eradicated all the witnesses."

To begin with, "everyone knows" is not an argument worthy of a jurist. Furthermore, S. Veil, believing perhaps to be getting out from behind the eight-ball, made her case only worse; in effect, in order to uphold what she was claiming, it would have been necessary for her to prove not only that the gas chambers had existed but that the Nazis had destroyed them and that they liquidated all the witnesses: a vast criminal undertaking about which one wonders on what order, when, with whom and by what means the Germans would have carried it out in greatest secrecy.

But what does it matter? We shall take note of this concession by S. Veil: there is neither proof, nor traces, nor witnesses to the gas chambers. It so happens that, in trying to reassure her circle, S. Veil clothed this surprising concession with conventional parlance. Here is, therefore, in her own words, what she confided in an "interview-event" for France-Soir Magazine (May 7, 1983, p. 47), of which the title was: "Simone Veil's warning in regard to Hitler's diaries: 'We risk banalizing genocide'":

"What strikes me nowadays is the paradox of the situation: someone publishes a diary attributed to Hitler by sheer dint of publicity and a great deal of money without, it seems, taking very great precautions to assure himself of its authenticity, yet, at the same time, in the course of a trial brought against Faurisson for having denied the existence of the gas chambers, those lodging the complaint are obliged to apply a formal proof about the reality of the gas chambers. Yet everyone knows that the Nazis destroyed these gas chambers and systematically eradicated all the witnesses."

A choice so full of consequences as that of S. Veil is not to be explained solely by the disaster of April 26, 1983 but by an entire series of events which, for her, made 1982 a dark year in terms of the history of the gas chambers and the credibility of witnesses. I will recall here but three of these events:

- 1) On April 21, 1982, historians, politicians and former deportees founded an association in Paris having as its objective the research of evidence for the existence and operation of the gas chambers (ASSAG: Association pour l'étude des assassinats par gaz sous le régime national-socialiste; Association for the study of killings by gas under the national-socialist regime); one year later, this association had still not discovered any proof [this is still the case today in 1993, since, envisioned according to its own statutes for a "duration limited to the realization of its objective," this association has not disbanded];
- 2) In May, 1982, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs launched a noteworthy "Deportation Exposition, 1933-1945" in Paris; this exposition was supposed to continue by touring throughout France; I immediately sent out a text in which I demonstrated the fallacious character of this exposition: no evidence -- except fraudulent evidence -- nor any precise testimony for the existence of Nazi gas chambers was able to be shown to visitors; additionally, Ms. Jacobs, the person responsible for this initiative by the Ministry, took it upon herself to immediately cancel this would-be vagabond exposition;
- 3) From June 29 to July 2, 1982 an international symposium was held at the Sorbonne on "Nazi Germany and the extermination of the Jews"; this colloquium had been announced as a decisive reply to the revisionist offensive in France; it was supposed to have concluded with a resounding press conference; in reality, it was totally different: the first day of the proceedings, we distributed in the Sorbonne's entrance hall recent copies of my Response to Pierre Vidal-Naquet (not without risk to ourselves); the colloquium was carried out behind closed doors and in a turbulent atmosphere; finally, during the press conference, the two colloquium organizers, historians François Furet and Raymond Aron, weren't even mentioning the words "gas chamber(s)."

I often say it's on this date of July 2, 1982 that the myth of the Nazi gas chambers and their associated witnesses died or entered their final death throws, at least on the level of historical research. At the very heart of the Sorbonne, one had thus disconcertingly discovered the absence of any solid proof and any witness worthy of trust. Notwithstanding, one had previously trumpeted that this colloquium would put an end to "the ineptitude of Faurisson" by bringing forth a mass of evidence and testimonies. Such a silence after all that fanfare was truly eloquent.

3. The Written Testimony of Fajnzylberg-Janowski

I said earlier that at my trial not a single witness took the risk of appearing before the court. At the last minute, my accusers had nonetheless provided the written testimony of a Jew who was living in Paris but whom one intentionally kept from appearing in the dock. This Jew was the famous Alter Szmul Fajnzylberg, born in Stockek, Poland, October 23, 1911. This former Polish waiter, an atheistic Jew and Communist political delegate for the international brigades serving in Spain, had been imprisoned during a period of three years at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In his brief written testimony, he essentially stated that, working in the Auschwitz crematory (the Altes Krematorium, or Krematorium I), he had spent a good deal of his time locked up with his comrades in the coke-room, for, on each occasion that the SS gassed Jews in the adjoining room, they took the precaution of sequestering the Sonderkommando in the coke-room so that no Jew might visibly confirm the gassing operation! Once the gassing operation was completed, the Germans freed the Sonderkommando members and made them collect and incinerate the victims. Thus, the Germans would have dissimulated the crime and yet revealed its results!

This unseeing witness is equally known by the names Alter Feinsilber, Stanislaw Jankowski or Kaskowiak. One can read his testimony in another form in the Auschwitz Diaries.(2)

4. The Unravelling of the Witnesses at the First Zündel Trial (1985)

The important victory won by Revisionism in France on April 26, 1983 would go on to confirm itself in 1985 with the first Zündel trial in Toronto. I would like to dwell a moment on this trial in order to underscore the impact on everyone's point of view, and especially as far as the testimonies on the Auschwitz gas chambers are concerned: for the first time since the war, Jewish witnesses were subjected to a regular cross-examination. Moreover, without wanting to minimize the importance of the second Zündel trial (that of 1988), I should like it to be understood that the 1985 trial already contained the seeds for all that was attained in the 1988 trial, including the report by Leuchter and all the scientific reports which, in the aftermath, would proliferate in the wake of the Leuchter Report.

In 1985, as also afterwards in 1988, I served as advisor to Ernst Zündel and his lawyer, Douglas Christie. In 1985, I accepted this heavy responsibility only under condition that all the Jewish witnesses would, for the first time, be cross-examined on the material nature of the reported facts, bluntly and without discretion. I had noted, in effect, that from 1945 to 1985, Jewish witnesses had been granted virtual immunity. Never had any defense lawyer thought or dared to ask them for material explanations about the gas chambers (exact location, physical appearance, dimensions, internal and external structure), or about the homicidal gassing (the operational procedure from beginning to end, the tools employed, the precautions taken by the executioners before, during and after execution). On rare occasions, as at the trial of Tesch, Drosihn and Weinbacher (3), lawyers formulated some unusual questions of a material nature, hardly troublesome for the witness, but these always found themselves on the fringes of the more fundamental questions which should have been asked. No lawyer ever demanded clarifications on a weapon which, indeed, he had never seen and that no one had ever shown him. At the major Nuremberg Trial of 1945-46, the German lawyers had manifested total discretion on this point. At the proceedings against Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961, the lawyer Dr. Robert Servatius had not wanted to raise the question; in a letter on this subject dated June 21, 1974, he wrote me: "Eichmann hat selbst keine Gaskammer gesehen; die Frage wurde nicht diskutiert; er hat sich aber auch nicht gegen deren Existenz gewandt" [Eichmann himself had not seen any gas chamber; the question was not discussed; but neither did he raise the issue of their existence]. At the Frankfurt Trial of 1963-65, the lawyers showed themselves to be particularly timid; I should mention that the atmosphere was rather inhospitable for the defense and the accused. This show trial will remain as a blot on the honor of German justice as on the person of Hans Hofmeyer, initially Landgerichtsdirektor, then Senatspräsident. During more than 180 sessions, the judges and juries, the public prosecutors and the private parties, the accused and their attorneys, as well as the journalists who had come from around the world, accepted as a complete physical representation of the "crime weapon" a mere map of the camp of Auschwitz and a map of the camp of Birkenau, whereupon five minuscule geometric figures were inscribed for the location of each of the alleged homicidal gas chambers, with the words, for Auschwitz: "Altes Krematorium," and for Birkenau: "Krematorium II," "Krematorium III," "Krematorium IV," and "Krematorium V"! These maps (4) were displayed in the courtroom. The Revisionists have often compared the Frankfurt trial with the 1450-1650 trials against witchcraft. Nevertheless, at least during those trials, someone sometimes bothered to describe or depict the witches' sabbath. At the Frankfurt trial, even among the lawyers who made difficulties for a witness like Filip Müller, not one asked of a Jewish witness or a repentant German defendant to describe for him in greater detail what he purported to have seen. Despite two judicial visits to the scene of the crime at Auschwitz, accompanied by some German lawyers, it seems not one of the latter insisted on any technical explanations or criminological expertise regarding the murder weapon. To the contrary, one of them, Anton Reiners, a Frankfurt lawyer, pushed complacency to the point of having himself photographed by the press while raising the chute cover by which the SS supposedly sprinkled Zyklon B granules into the alleged Auschwitz gas chamber.

And so at Toronto in 1985, I had fully decided to do away with these anomalies, to break the taboo and, for starters, pose, or rather have Douglas Christie pose, questions to the experts and Jewish witnesses as one normally poses in every trial where one is supposed to establish whether a crime has been committed and, if so, by whom, how and when. Fortunately for me, Ernst Zündel accepted my conditions and Douglas Christie consented to adopt this course of action and to pose to the experts and witnesses the questions that I would prepare for him. I was convinced that, in this manner, all might change, and the veil woven by so many false testimonies could be torn away. While I was not counting on Ernst Zündel's acquittal and we were all resigned to paying the price for our audacity, I nevertheless had hope that with the aid of this far-sighted man of character, and thanks to his intrepid lawyer, history, if not justice, would at last carry him into legend.

From the moment of the first cross-examination, a tremor of panic began to creep its way amid the ranks of the prosecution. Every evening and throughout most of the night, I would prepare the questions to ask. In the morning, I would turn over these questions, accompanied by the necessary documents, to lawyer Doug Christie who, for his part and with the aid of his female collaborator, conducted the essentially legal aspects of the effort. During the cross-examinations, I maintained a position close to the lawyer's podium and unremittingly furnished, on yellow notepads, supplementary and improvisational questions according to the experts' and witnesses' responses.

The expert cited by the prosecution was Dr. Raul Hilberg, author of *The Destruction of European Jews*. Day after day, he was subjected to such humiliation that, when solicited in 1988 by a new prosecutor for a new trial against Ernst Zündel, he refused to return to give witness; he explained the motive for his refusal in a confidential letter wherein he acknowledged his fear of having to once again confront the questions of Douglas Christie. From the cross-examination of Dr. Raul Hilberg, it was definitively brought out that no one possessed any proof for the existence either of an order, a plan, an instruction, or a budget for the presumed physical extermination of the Jews; furthermore, no one possessed either an expertise of the murder weapon (whether gas chamber or gas van), or an autopsy report

establishing the murder of a detainee by poison gas. However, in the absence of evidence regarding the weapon and victim, did there exist witnesses of the crime?

A testimony must always be verified. The usual first means of proceeding to this verification is to confront the assertions of the witness with the results of investigations or expert opinion regarding the material nature of the crime. In the case at hand, there were neither investigations, nor expertise relative to the alleged Auschwitz gas chambers. Here is what made any cross-examination difficult. Yet, this difficulty should not serve as an excuse, and one might even say that a cross-examination becomes ever more indispensable because, without it, there no longer remains any way of knowing whether the witness is telling the truth or not.

5. Jewish Witnesses Finally Cross-examined: A. Friedman and Dr. R. Vrba

For those persons interested in the technical and documentary means by which we were nevertheless in a position to severely cross-examine the two principal Jewish witnesses, Arnold Friedman and Dr. Rudolf Vrba, I can do no better than to recommend a reading of the trial transcript: *Queen versus Zündel*, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, January 7, 1985. Pages 304-371 cover the questioning and cross-examination of Arnold Friedman; the latter breaks down on pages 445-446 when he ends by acknowledging that he in fact saw nothing, that he had spoken from hearsay because, according to him, he had met persons who were convincing; perhaps, he added, he would have adopted the position of Mr. Christie rather than that of these other persons if only Mr. Christie had been able to tell him back then what he was telling him now!

Dr. Vrba was a witness of exceptional importance. One might even say about this trial in Toronto that the prosecution had found the means of recruiting "Holocaust" expert number one in the person of Dr. Raul Hilberg, and witness number one in the person of Dr. Rudolf Vrba. The testimony of this latter gentleman had been one of the principal sources of the famous War Refugee Board Report on the German Extermination Camps -- Auschwitz and Birkenau, published in November 1944 by the Executive Office of President Roosevelt. Dr. R. Vrba was also the author of *I Cannot Forgive* (Bantam Books, New York, 1964), written in collaboration with Alan Bestic who, in his preface declares with regard to him:

"Indeed I would like to pay tribute to him for the immense trouble he took over every detail; for the meticulous, almost fanatical respect he revealed for accuracy" (p.2).

Never perhaps had a court of justice seen a witness express himself with more assurance on the Auschwitz gas chambers. Yet, by the end of the cross-examination, the situation had reversed itself to the point where Dr. R. Vrba was left with only one explanation for his errors and his lies: in his book he had, he confessed, resorted to "poetic license" or, as he was wont to say in Latin, to "licentia poetarum"!

In the end, a bit of drama unfolded: Mr. Griffiths, the prosecutor who had himself solicited the presence of this witness *numero uno* and yet now apparently exasperated by Dr. Vrba's lies, fired off the following question:

"You told Mr. Christie several times in discussing your book *I Cannot Forgive* that you used poetic license in writing that book. Have you used poetic license in your testimony?" (p. 1636).

The false witness tried to parry the blow but prosecutor Griffiths hit him with a second question equally treacherous, this time concerning the number of gassing victims which Vrba had given; the witness responded with garrulous nonsense; Griffiths was getting ready to ask him a third and final question when suddenly, the matter was cut short and one heard the prosecutor say to the judge: "I have no further questions for Dr. Vrba" (p. 1643).

Crestfallen, the witness left the dock. Dr. Vrba's initial questioning, cross-examination and final questioning filled 400 pages of transcripts (pp. 1244-1643). These pages could readily be used in an encyclopedia of law under a chapter on the detection of false witnesses.

6. The Prosecution Gives Up On Calling Witnesses

Three years later, in 1988, during the second trial against Ernst Zündel, the public prosecutor deemed it prudent to abandon any recourse to witnesses. Canadian justice had apparently understood the lesson of the first trial: there were no credible witnesses to the existence and operation of the Nazi gas chambers.

Little by little, every other country in the world has learned this same lesson. At the trial of Klaus Barbie in France, in 1987, there was talk about the gas chambers of Auschwitz but no one produced any witnesses who could properly speak about them. The attorney Jacques Vergès, courageous yet not foolhardy, preferred to avoid the subject. This was a stroke of luck for the Jewish lawyers who feared nothing so much as to see me appearing at the side of Mr. Vergès. If this gentleman had accepted my offer to counsel him, we in France might have been able to strike a tremendous blow against the myth of the gas chambers.

All the while in France, during several Revisionist trials, Jewish witnesses sometimes came to evoke the gas chambers but none of them testified before the court as to having seen one or having participated in a homicidal gassing.

Today, gas chamber witnesses are making themselves extremely scarce and the Demjanjuk trial in Israel, which once again has revealed how much false testimony is involved in the matter, has contributed to the suppression. Several years ago, it happened that I was aggressively questioned at the rear of a law court by elderly Jews who presented themselves as "living witnesses to the gas chambers of Auschwitz," showing me their tatoos. It was necessary for me only to ask them to look me in the eyes and to describe for me a gas chamber that inevitably they retorted: "How could I do this? If I had seen a gas chamber with my own eyes I would not be here today to speak with you; I myself would have been gassed also." This brings us back, as one can see, to Simone Veil and her declaration of May 7, 1983, about which we already know what we should think.

7. The Media Witnesses

Aside from the judicial witnesses, there are media witnesses to the gas chambers, or homicidal gassing, at Auschwitz or Birkenau. Here one thinks of the names of Olga Lengyel, Gisela Perl, Fania Fénelon, Ota Kraus, Erich Kulka, Hermann Langbein, André Lettich, Samuel Pizar, Maurice Benroubi, André Rogerie, Robert Clary,... My library is full of these accounts which duplicate themselves over and over. Paul Rassinier was the first to show us in what manner the falsehood of these testimonies might be demonstrated; he did this notably for Auschwitz in *Le Véritable Procès Eichmann ou les Vainqueurs incorrigibles* (The True Eichmann Trial or, the Incurable Victors, Les Sept Couleurs, 1962), where Appendix V is devoted to *Médecin à Auschwitz* (Doctor at Auschwitz) regarding Miklos Nyiszli.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, the Revisionists found merit in undertaking studies critical of testimonies. Nowadays, it seems to me this exercise has become superfluous. Let us abstain from chasing after ambulances and instead leave the care of criticizing this sub-literature to the Exterminationists themselves, and in particular Jean-Claude Pressac, because -- so far as one can determine at present -- the most virulent anti-Revisionists end by putting themselves into the school of the Revisionists. The result is sometimes rife with pungency. In October 1991, the periodical *Le Déporté pour la liberté* (Deported for Liberty), an organ of l'Union nationale des associations de déportés, internés et familles de disparus (UNADIF; National Union of Associations of Deported, Prisoners and Families of the Missing), announced on its cover-page: "In the inner pages of this issue, part one of the testimony of Henry Bily, one of the rare escapees from a Sonderkommando." In his follow-up of November 1991, Mr. Bily continued the account of his Auschwitz experience under the title of *Mon histoire extraordinaire* (My Amazing Story).

However, in the following instalment of *Déporté pour la liberté*, that of December 1991-January 1992, there appeared a "Clarification regarding insertion of the text of Henry Bily in our columns." The review's director and editor uncovered the falsehood: in the major portion of his testimony, Mr. Bily had proceeded to:

"copy word for word without any citation of references, from passages (notably chapters 7 and 28) of the book by Dr. Myklos Nyiszli: *Médecin à Auschwitz*, written in 1946 and translated and published in 1961 by René Julliard publishing house. Unfortunately, the original errors committed by Dr. Nyiszli have also been repeated; finally, the most extensive borrowing has to do with the description of the Sonderkommando functions at Auschwitz-Birkenau, in which Henry Bily declares [deceivably] to have worked... The result of this analysis is that it is in no way possible to consider Henry Bily's text as an original and personal testimony."

To an attentive reader of this declaration, the sentence "Unfortunately, the original errors committed by Dr. Nyiszli have also been resumed" might allow one to perceive that, worst of all, Mr. Bily, a petty Jewish tradesman, had recopied a testimony which itself had already been false. As I have recently mentioned, Paul Rassinier had long ago proved that *Médecin à Auschwitz*, a work dear to Jean-Paul Sartre who in 1951 published parts of it in *Les Temps Modernes*, could only be one of the greatest impostures. Many Revisionists, and in particular Carlo Mattogno, have since confirmed this assessment. As for me, in my report regarding Jean-Claude Pressac's book *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* (Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York, 1989), I have inserted a section entitled: "Pressac's (involuntary) buffoonery in regard to M. Nyiszli." I recommend the reading of this section to people interested in false testimonies on Auschwitz, false testimonies which pharmacist J.C. Pressac tries to defend at any price by way of convolutions, laborious inventions and flighty speculations, thus unintentionally discrediting them once and for all (R. Faurisson, "Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers (1989) or, Pottering and Sputtering at Auschwitz and Birkenau According to J.C. Pressac," *Revue d'histoire révisionniste*, November 1990, pp. 126-130).

8. False Witnesses Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi

A few words force themselves to our attention in regard to Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi.

Regarding the former, I come back to my article "Un grand faux témoin: Elie Wiesel" [A Prominent False Witness: Elie Wiesel] (*Annales d'histoire révisionniste*, Spring 1988, pp. 163-168; see also "Un grand faux témoin: Elie Wiesel (suite)" [A Prominent False Witness: Elie Wiesel (Continued)], *Nouvelle Vision*, September 1993, pp. 19-24). In *Night* (preface by François Mauriac, Les Editions de Minuit, 1958), a biographical account particularly regarding his internment at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, Mr. Wiesel does not even mention the gas chambers but it appears, by way of a sort of universal media convention, that he is considered as a witness par excellence on the "Holocaust" and the gas chambers. According to him, if the Germans exterminated large numbers of Jews, it was by forcing them either into raging fires or ovens! The conclusion of his testimony includes an extremely curious episode (pp. 129-133) over which I have been waiting years for Elie Wiesel to furnish us an explanation: in January 1945 he tells us, the Germans gave him and his father the choice between staying behind in the camp to await the arrival of the Soviets, or leaving with the Germans; after agreeing between them, the father and son decided to depart for Germany with their executioners instead of staying in place to await their Soviet liberators...(5)

Curiously, for several years now, Primo Levi has been posthumously elevated by the media to the rank of first importance among witnesses of the Auschwitz gas chambers. He is the author of *Se questo è un uomo* ("If This Be A Man," Julliard Press, pocket edition, 1993). The first part of the book is the longest and the most important; it comprises 180 pages (pp. 7-186) and was edited in 1947; the author says, starting on page 19, that it was after the war he learned about the gassing of the Jews at Birkenau; he himself was working at Buna-Monowitz and had never set foot in Birkenau; also, he only spoke in extremely vague terms and but six times about "the" gas chamber (pp. 19, 48, 51, 96, 135 and 138) and on one occasion about the gas chambers (page 159); he is satisfied to nearly always mention it in the singular and as a rumor about which "everyone is talking" (page 51). Suddenly, in his "Appendix" written in 1976, being some 30 years later, the gas chambers make a forceful entry: in the space of 26 pages (pp. 189-214), which, in view of their more compact typography, can be considered as 30, the author mentions on 11 occasions (page 193, two times; page 198, three times; page 199, once; page 201, two times; pages 202, 209 and 210, once each); on two occasions, he speaks of "gas" and on nine occasions of "gas chambers" (always in the plural); he writes as if he had seen them: "The gas chambers were in effect camouflaged as shower rooms with plumbing, faucets, dressing rooms, clothes hooks, benches, etc." (page 198). He does not fear to write additionally: "The gas chambers

and the crematory ovens had been deliberately conceived to destroy lives and human bodies by the millions; the horrible record for this is credited to Auschwitz, with 24,000 deaths in a single day during the month of August 1944" (pp. 201-202).

Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi are not the only ones to have thus "enriched" their recollections.

Primo Levi was a chemical engineer. Regarding his crack-up or delirium from a scientific point of view in *If This Be A Man*, one should consult Pierre Marais' *En lisant de près les écrivains chantres de la Shoah -- Primo Levi, Georges Wellers, Jean-Claude Pressac* ("A Close Reading of the Siren Writers of the Shoah -- Primo Levi, Georges Wellers, Jean-Claude Pressac), La Vieille Taupe, 1991, 127 pages; see in particular "Le chimiste, la batterie de camion et... les chambres à gaz" ("The Chemist, the Truck Battery and... the Gas Chambers"), the chapter which involves Primo Levi (pp. 7-21). The latter committed suicide on April 11, 1987. It was to his very nature of being a Jew that he owes not having been shot by the Fascist militia on December 13, 1943 at the age of 24. "The Fascists had captured him in the role of a partisan (he was still carrying a pistol), and he declared himself a Jew in order not to be immediately shot. And it is in the role of a Jew that he was delivered over to the Germans. The Germans sent him to Auschwitz..." (Ferdinando Camon, "Chimie/Levi, la mort" ("Chemistry/Levi, death"), *Libération*, April 13, 1987, page 29).

Conclusion

From 1945 to 1985, the presumed judicial witnesses of the Auschwitz gas chambers have benefitted from an extraordinary privilege: they have always been spared the ordeal of cross-examination regarding the material nature of the purported facts they related. In 1985, at the first of two Zündel trials in Toronto, attorney Douglas Christie was fully agreeable, based on my suggestion and offer of assistance, to conduct the cross-examination according to standard procedure for these type of witnesses. The result was the unmasking of witnesses Arnold Friedman and Dr. Rudolf Vrba. This reversal was so serious that today one can no longer find witnesses willing to take the risk of swearing before the dock of a court of law that they saw a homicidal gassing, whether at Auschwitz or any other concentration camp within the Third Reich.

The would-be media witnesses continue to proliferate in the world of radio, television and books, where they hardly run the risk of being put into difficulty by embarrassing questions. Yet even these witnesses are becoming more and more vague, making themselves liable to denunciation by representatives of the exterminationist thesis. These latter are in effect aligning themselves more and more with the Revisionist school because they realize that up until now they have stood by the lies of too many false witnesses, lies which end by costing their own cause too dearly.

As there are notoriously more and more risks now in presenting oneself as a witness of the gas chambers -- as again did the Jew Filip Müller in 1979 -- the solution which nowadays tends to prevail is the one which, since May 7, 1983, Simone Veil has had to adopt in the aftermath of the April 26 decision by the Paris Court of Appeal, a decision which recognized that my work on the problem of the gas chambers was serious insofar as I demonstrated that the accepted testimonies flew in the face of strong physical-chemical impossibilities. The solution, or moreover, the evasion, advocated by Ms. Veil consisted in saying that, if there were in effect no proofs, no traces, and no witnesses of the crime, it was because the Germans had destroyed all the evidence, all the traces, and all the witnesses. Such a statement, besides being absurd, would in turn necessitate evidence which Ms. Veil has not provided. But this matters little. Let us take note of this statement and, like Ms. Veil and those who in practice seem to rally to her thesis, let us also put to good use the evidence long brought to light by the Revisionists: not only do there exist no proofs and no traces of Nazi gas chambers, but there are no witnesses for them either.

Today, at the close of 1993, the testimonies regarding the Auschwitz gas chambers are discredited, even among the Exterminationists. History as founded upon these testimonies is beginning to give way to history founded either on facts or arguments of a scientific nature. It is this which I had advocated in my article of December 29, 1978 in the *Monde* and in my letter to the *Monde* of January 16, 1979. It was necessary to wait more than ten years to see our adversaries venture into the arena where I had invited them to join us in being evaluated: the field of science. Jean-Claude Pressac had been appointed, notably by Mr. and Mrs. Klarsfeld, to denounce "testimonial history" and to replace it with a scientific basis or, at least, one with a scientific appearance.

Claude Lanzmann and the supporters of "testimonial history" are upset,⁽⁶⁾ to the satisfaction, by the way, of the Revisionists. A half-century of unsubstantiated testimonies must now be definitively succeeded by an inquiry for facts and proofs along a judicial, scientific and historical basis.

Footnotes

1. S. Veil, former Minister of Justice, former President of the European Parliament.
2. *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Sonderheft (I), Handschriften von Mitgeleidern des Sonderkommandos, Verlag Staatliches Auschwitz-Museum, 1972, pp. 32-71.
3. On the cross-examination of the witness Dr. Charles Sigismund Bendel by attorney Dr. Zippel, see "Excerpt from transcript of proceedings of a Military Court for the Trial of War Criminals held at the War Crimes Court, Curiohaus, Hamburg, on Saturday 2nd March, 1946, upon the trial of Bruno Tesch, Joachim Drosihn and Karl Weinbacher," transcript, pp. 30-31 (doc. NI-11953). Regarding this abominable trial, it is indispensable to read: Dr. William Lindsay, "Zyklon B, Auschwitz, and the Trial of Bruno Tesch," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Fall 1983, pp.261-303. This study has been reproduced in part by Udo Walendy in *Historische Tatsachen*, Nr. 25 (1985), pp. 10-23.

4. For a representation of these two maps, see Hermann Langbein, *Der Auschwitz-Prozess, Eine Dokumentation*, 2. Bänder, Frankfurt, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1965, 1027 p., pp. 930-933. For an authoritative study of the trial, see Dr. Wilhelm Stäglich, *Der Auschwitz-Prozess, Legende oder Wirklichkeit? Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme*, Tübingen, Grabert Verlag, 1979, XII-492 S.

5. One point which cannot fail to be interesting is that in the German translation of this book (*Die Nacht zu begraben, Elisha*, with German translation by Curt Meyer-Clason, Ullstein, 1962, pp. 17-153), the crematory ovens of the original French version are done away with to be replaced by gas chambers (which also applies to Buchenwald). I owe this discovery to the Swiss Revisionist Jürgen Graf and I am indebted to A.W., a German Revisionist living in France, for a list of 15 instances where the German translator thought it good to use the word "gas" where it was not used in the original text (see Annex). In December 1986, I made my way to Oslo to attend the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Elie Wiesel. Assisted by friends, I distributed a tract previously titled "Elie Wiesel, A Prominent False Witness." Some months later, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, one of my most implacable adversaries, denounced Mr. Wiesel as a man "who talks any rubbish that comes into his head... It suffices to read certain of his descriptions in *Night* to know that certain of his accounts are not exact and that he ends by transforming himself into a Shoah peddler. He commits an injustice, an immense injustice to historical truth" (Interview by Michel Folco, Zéro, April 1987, page 57).

6. See notably the article by Robert Redeker which he published in his review *Les Temps Modernes*, under the title: "La Catastrophe du révisionnisme" ("The Revisionist Catastrophe," November 1993, pp. 1-6); here, Revisionism is presented as a catastrophic sign of a changing time: "Auschwitz" was -- and for the author, still is -- a "mystique," which is to say a belief enveloped by religious reverence; yet, he says in a deploring tone that "Auschwitz" is becoming the subject of historical and technological considerations. This article was in printing when there appeared in *L'Express* a substantial write-up on the new book by Jean-Claude Pressac (September 23, 1993, pp. 76-80, 82-87). Claude Lanzmann virulently protested against this turn of events taken by "Holocaust" history. He wrote: "Even if it is in order to refute them, we thus legitimize the arguments of the Revisionists, which become the only criterion by which every text and every author is now judged. The Revisionists occupy the entire playing field" (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, September 30, 1993, page 97).

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This text is a chapter of *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte. Ein Handbuch über strittige Fragen des 20. Jahrhundert*, a collective book on advanced revisionist studies, edited by Ernst Gauss [Germar Rudolf] and published by Grabert in Tübingen (Germany) in 1994. The title was "Die Zeugen der Gaskammern von Auschwitz", p. 99-109. This work was translated from the original French by Daniel D. Desjardins.

This book has been translated into English and corrected first on Internet, and finally in *Dissecting the Holocaust -- The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory'*, Capshaw (Alabama), Theses and Dissertations Press, 2000. p. 133-144.

The French original text was not published until it was included in the *Ecrits révisionnistes*, IV, p. 1554-1569, in 1999.
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